



**John H. De Wolf 1894 - 1927**  
6. 1853 d. 1927

1. Born in Old Tappan to Martin and Catherine (née Haring) DeWolf. He married Margaret Cleveland in 1875, and together they had two children, Charles, for whom the Middle School was named, and Annie DeWolf Post. Served as the First Mayor of the newly formed Borough of Old Tappan. In the first Borough election, there were 22 voters. His time as mayor saw the creation of the first modern, paved roads, the First World War, and several films made in Old Tappan throughout the 1910s. During his leadership, he annexed Eastwood into Old Tappan, saw the destruction of the Collignon Factory, as well as the First Telephone being installed in Lashmond's Hotel. During his 33 years as Mayor, he saw the first cars and drivers in Old Tappan. He Died in Office in 1927.



**Wilbur H. Eckerson**  
1928 - 1934 6. 1870 d. 1941

2. Born in Old Tappan to Jacob and Margaret (née Haring) Eckerson. He married Edith M. Doucher in 1913. Together, they would have four children, John Jacob, Wilbur Jr., Robert, and Margaret Davies. He served the American Army in the Spanish-American War and was a member of the faculty at the New York College of Music. He was Old Tappan's first tax collector from 1898 to 1900, and was elected to town council in 1914. He served on the school board and as its President from 1920 to 1928, at which point he was elected Mayor. He was a founding member of the first Old Tappan Fire Department, which began during his time as Mayor. He also battled the town-wide Scarlet Fever Epidemic in 1932 and saw the creation of the Ladies Auxiliary. In his later years, he was a member of the Hackensack Lodge 658 of the Elks.



**Walter G. De Berg**  
1935 - 1946 6. 1888 d. 1947

3. Born in Hackensack to Julius F. and Helen (née Fricky) DeBerg. He married Madeline K. Herrick in 1910, and they had two children, Walter Jr. and Madelyn Ketchum. During his time as Mayor, he saw the entirety of World War II and the 1941 Polio Epidemic in Old Tappan, which closed down the schools. He was also in charge during the building of the original Charles DeWolf Middle School, as well as the first Fire House. As one of the first Mayors, he participated in the advisement of land investment by the Borough and named the 10 main streets in town. He saw the creation of the First Aid Corp and the Old Tappan branch of the Girl Scouts.



**Franklin Clark Smith 1956 - 1959 6. 1917 d. 1992**

7. Born in Connecticut to Herbert and Dora (née Bogue) Smith, and grew up in Ridgewood, NJ. He married Adrienne F. Heinige in 1944, and they had three children, Ronald, Gary, and Anita Robinson. He served in the Army Air Corps during the Second World War and was briefly stationed in Texas. He worked as a manager of advertising, public relations, and technical publications for Bendix/Teterboro from the 1940s until his retirement. He was a member of the Republican Club, the Civic Club, and a charter member of the Old Tappan Lions Club. He was a trustee of the Pascack Valley Hospital in Westwood and an adviser of the Boy Scout County Explorer Association. During his time as Mayor, Old Tappan saw the opening of the first grocery store in Bi State Plaza, FINAST, as well as the new Trinity Reformed Church, of which he was a founding member. Upon his retirement in the 1970s, he moved to Chatham, Massachusetts.



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# Mayors of Old Tappan

**David Stewart 1947 - 1951**  
6. 1882 d. 1968

4. Born in Brooklyn to David and Annie (née Bleakly) Stewart. He married Lillian Wepler in 1907, and together they had three children, George, Robert, and Elsie Hayhoe. He moved to Old Tappan in the 1920s and served on the Board of Education. He was also a founding member of the Old Tappan Fire Department. In 1931, he was elected to Town Council, which he served on for 15 years before being elected Mayor. His term as Mayor saw the creation of Leeson Park, as one of the first groups of homes built in such a way in town. In his later years, he lived in Hillsdale until his death.

**John E. Geare 1952**  
6. 1914 d. 2003

5. Born in Maryland to Cyril and Elizabeth (née Edwards) Geare. He married Lydia Brown in 1939, and together they had two children, John and Jane West. He later married Elizabeth Englar Potter in 1995. He moved to Englewood in the 1930s and eventually to Old Tappan in the 1940s. He worked as a Steel Salesman and was Mayor for less than a year. Later in life, he would move back to his hometown.

**William J. Davenport**  
1952 - 1955 6. 1897 d. 1980

6. Born in New York City to Thomas and Cecilia (née Stovosler) Davenport. He married Marie Jane Lanza and moved to Old Tappan in 1927. Together, they had three children, William, Cecilia Weidmann, and Mary Lou Cow. In addition to his public service, his profession was a welder and boilermaker. His public service began with the fire department, of which he was a charter member. He served as President of the Board of Education from 1937 to 1940, and as a councilman from 1942 to 1952. His leadership saw the EMS' first ambulance, the first Old Tappan students attending Northern Valley Demarest High School, the building of St. Pius X Church, of which he was a founding member, and the first town Master Plan.

## Since 1894



**John J. Corrigan**  
1960 - 1967 6. 1909 d. 1987

8. Born in New York City to John and Catharine (née Rourke) Corrigan. He married Helen M. Greenidge in 1936. In his professional career, he was the owner of Royal Nat and Candy Company in Hoboken and served the Fire Department. During his time as mayor in the 1960s, he saw the creation of Stone Point Park, the first graduating class of NJOE, and T. Baldwin Demarest Elementary School. He was integral in the creation of Lake Tappan as well as the first Ragamuffin Parade for children of the town. During his leadership, the Old Tappan Women's Club was formed, as was the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Following his time as mayor, he served on the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, and as President of the Old Tappan Republican Club. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and, in his later years, was a school crossing guard.

**Malcolm S. Davies 1968 - 1971**  
6. 1918 d. 2008

9. Born in England to Bertie and Lucy (née Mann) Davies and originally from Haverstraw, New York. He married Margaret Eckerson, daughter of Mayor Eckerson, in 1948 and moved to Old Tappan, his wife's hometown, the same year. Together, they had two children, John and Pvy Vaughn. Professionally, he was employed at Lederle Labs in Pearl River, New York. In 1960, he was elected to the town council, which he remained on until 1968. While on the town council, he served as Police Commissioner for the Old Tappan Police Department. His time as Mayor saw the creation of the Golf Course, which he pioneered. In 1971, after the end of his time as Mayor, due to arising issues at the golf course, he took charge of the course management for several years. Following his time as Mayor, he was also a Planning Board member and secretary.

**Walter H. Frueh 1972 - 1979**  
6. 1926 d. 1998

10. Born in Weehauken to Howard and Edna (née Beattie) Frueh. He grew up in Bergenfield and served in the United States Navy following the end of World War II. Following his service, he married Kay Helfrich in 1952, and they had three children, Robert, Karen Imbarrato, and Sandra Rivera. His profession was a self-employed Certified Public Accountant. He served three terms on Town Council from 1962 to 1971 before being elected Mayor. While he was Mayor, Foodtown moved into BiState Plaza, the Old Tappan Public Library was built in its current spot, and one of the first commercial spaces, Prentice Hall, was built. After his time as Mayor, he worked with the local American Legion until his passing.

**Edward J. Gallagher**  
1980 - 1995  
6. 1929 d. 2004

11. Born in Washington Heights, NY, to Edward and Theresa (née Ogden) Gallagher. He married Lois Decanto in 1951, and together they had three children, Matthew, Thomas, and Doreen Pfeiffer. He served Old Tappan in many capacities, including many years on the Town Council. During his 16 years as Mayor, he was known for having been fiscally conservative and for keeping Property Taxes low at a time when taxes rose in other cities within the county. He served as President of the League of Municipalities, President of the Pascack Valley Mayors, and Old Tappan Republican Party. His administration was the first to be in the new, current Borough Hall. He saw the installation of the first traffic light in Old Tappan on the corner of Washington Avenue and Old Tappan Road. Following his time as Mayor, he participated in activities through the community, such as being an Eucharistic Minister and participating in the Finance Council at St. Pius X.

**Thomas Gallagher 2024 - Present 6. 1963**

15. Born in Old Tappan to Mayor Edward and Lois (née Decanto) Gallagher. He attended T. Baldwin Demarest Elementary School, Charles DeWolf Middle School, and Bergen Catholic High School before attending Fairleigh Dickinson University. He married Susan Heady in 1988, and they have two children, Brady and Caden. Professionally, Mayor Gallagher works as the President of Althern, a Manufacturers' Representative Agency. Since 1979, he has served as a member of the Old Tappan Fire Department and was the Chief between 2002 and 2003. He also served as Fire Company President, the Company's Trustee, the Relief Allocation Treasurer, and Fire Prevention Coordinator. He was appointed to Council in 2016 to fill the seat of newly elected Mayor Kramer. He has served on the First Aid Corps and the Planning Board before being elected Mayor in 2023.

**Raymond R. Wiss 1996 - 1999**  
6. 1952

12. Born in Park Ridge to Raymond and Ann (née Cioffi) Wiss. He married Pamela Peacock in 1974, and they have three children, Timothy, Amanda, and Amy Lavin. After his time as Mayor, he served as labor counsel in municipalities all over Bergen County, as well as president of the New Jersey School Boards Association from 2010 to 2012, which he previously served as a member of the Board of Directors. For 19 years, he served various school boards, including the Northern Valley Regional Board of Education as board president and vice-president, and as president of the Old Tappan Board of Education. Presently, he is a managing member of Wiss & Borough, P.C., counselors at law in Westwood.

**Victor M. Polce 2000 - 2015 6. 1955**

13. Born to Victor and Renee (née Canton) Polce. He married Joyann Lorenzo in 1980, and they had three children, Stephen, Veronica, and Jackie Stockel. He attended Franklin and Marshall and Columbia. He worked on Wall Street in Global Financial Leadership. During his time as Mayor, he worked to improve sidewalks, as well as overseeing the completion of the sewer project. He pushed for the creation of Oakes Park and allocated funding for the new Public Library Renovation. During his time as Mayor, the town's Moody's debt rating was upgraded to AAA, one of only 7 towns to have achieved that status. Since 2017, following his tenure as Mayor, he has been living in Pierson, NY, and has pursued a career as a real estate agent.

**John M. Kramer 2016 - 2023 6. 1939**

14. Born in Harrington Park to Karl and Ruth (née Mahaffey) Kramer. In 1942, at the age of 3, his family moved to Old Tappan, where he would go on to spend the rest of his life dedicated to public service. As a young boy, he was a Boy Scout, beginning this lifelong commitment to his community. In 1961, he began a career in law enforcement, joining the Old Tappan Police Department. The following year, he married Carol McDermott and had two sons, John and Robert. While serving as a police officer, he also volunteered as a firefighter. Over his 34-year career with the Police Department, he served 26 years as Chief. During that time, he also became President of the Bergen County Police Chiefs' Association—a role he remains actively involved in today. His commitment to public service extended beyond law enforcement as he also served as a member of the Planning Board. In 1993, he was asked to run for the Old Tappan Town Council. Subsequently, he was elected to serve six consecutive terms, and in 2015, elected as Mayor. He served as President of the Pascack Valley Mayors' Association and was an active member of the Northern Valley Mayors' Association for many years. Now retired from official office, he continues to live in Old Tappan, surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He remains involved in numerous committees and continues to be a welcome presence in the community he has served for decades.

